1:McIlwraith E-5 (1922-1924)1948
NE6 Bellacoola NE6

was not carefully observed. Those wishing to dig took turns with the tools; there was no supervision, and no orders given. When the grave was ready, Jim Pollard asked Judas to perform the rite with the spruce bough, which he did with a branch brought by one of the youths. The young men lowered the coffin into the grave while the band continued to play. The missionary then read the Christian burial service, after which he withdrew. Some of the young men brought planks from old houses near-by, sawed them to the size of the grave and laid them over the coffin as a cover. At this juncture Judas, one of the oldest and most conservative of the Bella Coola, rose to speak. First he offered consolation to the mourning relatives by pointing out that all must travel the same road. Then he spoke to Jessie, telling her not to linger, but to travel back the path of her ancestors from generation to generation until she reached the place where they first came down from above, and thence to ascend to *Nusmâ'a*. It was impossible to obtain a literal translation of the speech, which was punctuated by calls of "*Yo*" from the male Bella Coola. The next speaker was Jim Pollard, the most influential Kimaquit and a personal friend, though not a relative, of Captain Schooner's.

"Go," he said to the dead woman, "Go to the localities from which came your first forefathers in the beginning of time. There you will find your most valuable ancestral possessions. Go at once, do not linger and lose yourself on the road from generation to generation."

Turning to George Nelson, he went on, "Do not be downhearted, all of us must travel the same road. It was made by no man, it is the work of *Alquntăm*."

Looking back once more to the grave, he said, "In *Kimpo'ai* are buried many illustrious relatives of yours. You will be among friends, whereas we are left to lament your departure."

It was impossible to write down the words at the time and the above record is not literally correct, although it expresses the gist of the speech.

Captain Schooner whispered to Robert Hood, another of the

1:McIlwraith E-5 (1922-1924)1948
NE6 Bellacoola NE6

The explanation of these manifestations of the supernormal, for such they are considered to be, lies in the conviction that every activity of the mind is due to supernatural causation, the functioning of the spirit. In the round of daily life there are always good and bad incidents; the person who wakes expecting to meet one or other before nightfall recognizes the fulfilment of his premonition in some small occurrence, and narrates it to his fellows as proof of what he had told them in the morning. In case of some major event, such as death or disaster, the Bella Coola assume that some previous indication must have been given. Looking back after the event, a man easily persuades himself that he "felt" a warning, and is more than ever convinced that his spirit, the cause of his thoughts, has supernatural ability.

Conviction in the near presence of the supernatural has had somewhat surprising results with regard to Christian Bella Coola. A man converted in middle life carries all the fervour and realism of the old religion with him to the new, and feels thoroughly familiar with the atmosphere of the Old Testament. Visitations, such as therein described, are similar to those experienced by his fathers and himself, and he scorns the white man who questions their literal accuracy. He continues to hear the voices of supernatural beings, and to interpret mental pictures as visions, but he ascribes them to the beings of the white man's religion. The following is a rather striking illustration of this point:

A number of years ago a devout Christian, who may be designated X, was a patient in the hospital at Bella Bella. In the same ward was a young Bella Bella lad whose sickness refused to yield to treatment. X, becoming interested in his neighbour, began to ponder about his condition, until presently he felt convinced that the sufferer would be better by seven o'clock the following morning, and told him so. A marked improvement was noticeable by the time predicted, but the white doctor foolishly (according to X) gave his patient some

1:McIlwraith Σ-5 (1922-1924) 1948
NE6 Bellacoola NE6

159
177 more medicine and he became worse. The same thing happened
* 787 on the following day. The sick boy grew steadily worse until,
781 nine days later, he felt that he was dying and asked X to help
him.

● 797 "No," replied X, "I am no doctor. But you will be all right. I see Holy Ghost, Holy Spirit, Baptism, and Believe-it [Faith?] by your bed. Repent and you will be saved."

X added that the Bella Bella saw and repented before his death so that he has undoubtedly been saved.

X is a friend of the writer's and a man with whom he worked for a number of months and whom he feels that he knows intimately. He is almost invariably truthful, and any falsehoods he uses are clumsy and easily detected. In this case there is no doubt but that he believes he saw these four figures as four white human beings. He was in an emotional condition at the time, hoping and expecting to see something of the kind. In earlier days he would have seen supernatural beings of the Bella Coola pantheon with equal conviction. On quite another occasion, when he was preaching, the same man felt what seemed to be a heavy drop of water fall on his head. He was in the open at the time and, looking up, was surprised to find nothing from which it could have fallen. He realized that it must have been power which had come to him, and forthwith he began to preach as he had never preached before. He expected supernatural assistance, and the belief that it had been granted to him undoubtedly strengthened his efforts.

* 787 All Bella Coola are not equally liable to visions and mental
781 visitations. Some, such as X, are constantly experiencing
159 them, whereas others of more stolid disposition do not feel the presence of the supernatural to the same extent. None the less, beings of the other world are constantly around them and, before the introduction of Christianity, it is unlikely that any individual passed through life without coming in contact with some manifestation of the supernatural. Consequently, stories
x 787 descriptive of this are intelligible to the Bella Coola, bizarre

1:McIlwraith E-5 (1922-1924)1948
NE6 Bellacoola NE6

In his younger days X was somewhat wild, taking his full share in the frivolities of the village, and having a fondness for wine which he brewed himself. On one occasion he prepared a barrel of the mixture, half of which he promptly consumed with the aid of a few friends, then, semi-intoxicated, he fell asleep. He dreamt that there came to him what must have been a male being, although all that was visible was the lower half of his body, which was gleaming white. The apparition seized X by the nape of the neck, lifted him from the floor, and carried him across the house to the barrel of wine, revolving sunwise on himself the while.

"You made this fearful stuff," said his supernatural visitor. "It will make your life dirty, as dirty as this."

Still turning sunwise on himself, with these words he carried X to the doorstep and held him suspended, face downwards over it. Everyone who enters must tread there, so that it is recognized as being the dirtiest part of the house, and X had no doubt about the meaning of the apparition's remark. This experience was so vivid and impressive that X asserted he immediately became a Christian and abandoned his evil ways. At the present time he is one of the few Bella Coola not addicted to home-brew.

A few years later the same being came a second time. X had been ill for a number of months with a sickness caused, so he believed, by a sorcerer. His friends had carried him to bathe in the Hot Springs and the treatment helped his condition considerably, but a little later he suffered a relapse, and was so wretched that he told his mother he would die presently. The same night he was visited by his apparition, but this time he could see the whole body; it was a man with large, powerful frame and a face so white that he could not bear to look at it. The figure was clad in undyed cedar-bark, and X immediately realized that he would recover, though he knew he would not be granted the same power as if the clothing had been of dyed cedar-bark such as is worn by supernatural shamans. The dream-man told X that he had come to him because of the clean condition he had attained by washing in the Hot Springs, followed by continence, and warned him that he must continue this for a year from the time of his immersion or he would die, but that if he obeyed this injunction he would recover. His visitor, who was, of course, a supernatural being, took X under one arm and carried him far to the south, where he washed him in a hot spring at the base of a steep mountain. Then he vanished; X arose and prepared to make his way home, but, lo, he was there already. Rationalizing later, X concluded that his body must have remained in his house, and that it was either his spirit or his life that had been carried away.

As X lay asleep the next night, the same being came to him and

1: McIlwraith E-5 (1922-1924)1948
NE6 Bellacoola NE6

ling X, the monster carried away the girl. X watched and knew that it must have taken her life; so it transpired, for in the morning she was found dead. The black being did not reappear the following night.

X soon became fat and well, to the surprise of all, and many of the chiefs asked him to give a shaman's dance. He declined, not having received name, instructions, song, or tangible object from the white, supernatural being who had befriended him. He did not even know his benefactor's name.

At intervals during his life-time, X has seen the white supernatural being and, more rarely, the black one in his dreams. The most vivid occasion was when he heard a sound in the attic of his house and climbed up outside to investigate. The ladder broke, precipitating him through an unglazed window into the loft with a broken leg. All night he lay there in agony, and it was not until the next day that his friends were able to lower him in a sling and take him to *Ḳomqo·ts* en route to the hospital at Bella Bella. Their departure was delayed by a storm and as X lay suffering he told his wife that it would have been better if he had broken his neck instead of his leg. That night, while half-asleep, the world again became open to him and he saw the black creature come bounding along the trail towards him; it entered the house, jumped around him, and finally leapt into his body. He called to his wife to burn dried salmon beneath his bed to expel the evil monster; this had the desired effect though he did not see its actual departure. The next night the white apparition came to him, telling him that he had erred seriously in wishing for death, that one should accept what was in store for one and not oppose *Ălqunŭm*'s wishes. The being went on to say that it was wicked to prepare too far in advance, and intimated that X's misfortune was the result of having made ready tools for clearing an unnecessary tract of land.[19]

The white being has even appeared during his waking hours. On one occasion he felt it coming when he was in the mission-house, where the missionary was writing a letter for him. Although still invisible, X knew what was approaching and tried to close the door but he was helpless. In came the apparition, at sight of whom X swayed so violently that the missionary asked what was the matter. It went away again in a moment, leaving X shaken and bathed in perspiration.

The experiences just described lie on the border-line between dream and vision. X has frequently seen the apparition

[19] This occurred during the first war, and X remembered having heard that the Germans had laid up stores of munitions. He concluded that this must be evil and that they would fail accordingly. He repeated this statement on many occasions and claims to have foretold the result of the war from his vision.

1:McIlwraith E-5 (1922-1924) 1948
NE6 Bellacoola NE6

159 in his sleep, and hopes that it will grant him specific supernatural power. He realizes that he could increase the probability of obtaining this by ceremonial chastity, and believes that it would come to him if he went alone to the woods and lay fasting for some time. Another means would be to concentrate his thoughts upon the desired end, but X is too good a Christian to do so; he is in the unhappy position of knowing too much of two religions to be able to practise either unreservedly. Such experiences are not likely to occur to any but a man of high-strung, imaginative temperament, to whom dreams and mental excitements appear especially vivid. X is intensely religious, so that it is easy for him to interpret every phenomenon in terms of the supernatural. It will be noted that most of the dreams just described took place when he was sick, precisely the time when hallucinations are to be expected. They were more coherent than those of most Bella Coola, though the difference is one of degree rather than of kind.

Most dreams are comparatively simple, and the information received in them is intelligible. They come to all, irrespective of rank or prerogative. Nevertheless, it is believed that an inheritable tendency runs in some families; this does not mean that all members of such a group dream constantly, but they are more likely to do so than others. Those occurring at the winter solstice are more carefully observed than at other times, since it is then that the supernatural beings decide events for the coming year and a man's spirit may be able to inform him of what has been decided. Consequently, as soon as *Ălquntăm* enters *Nusmăt-a*, wise men separate from their wives and concentrate on dreaming, hoping to learn what is in store for them. For instance, if a man sees himself seated before a large pile of goods, he knows that he will have the good fortune to do this during the coming year; on the other hand, if he foresees ill luck, it means that he will be unfortunate. Another time when dreams are especially desired is before the summer solstice when hunters in particular observe ceremonial chastity. This purification not only increases the likelihood of such

1: McIlwraith E-5 (1922-1924) 1948
NE6 Bellacoola NE6

754 members, and delegated the task to a man who was known to be skilled in such matters. The latter stole some shreds of the offender's clothing, placed them in a human skull which he fastened to a long rope and threw into a swift stretch of the river. As the rapids tossed the skull to and fro, the person whose clothing was within began to feel uneasy; first he experienced a jumping pain in his head, but as the wild movements continued, he became light-headed and finally delirious. At this juncture, it was decided to pull back the skull, but the rope broke and it was carried away downstream. Nothing could save the man and he died within a few hours. This particular incident occurred among the Bella Bella, but it is agreed that it might have happened in Bella Coola.

[554] The mingled fear of, and aversion to, a person who knows some such secret method of killing, fades into insignificance compared to the extreme loathing of every Bella Coola for sorcerers. Their methods of killing may be similar to the ones just described, but they are evil creatures who practise secretly, working entirely to gratify their own personal desires. Not [683] only is the murder of a sorcerer a virtuous act, but the relatives of one should be put to death without mercy. There is no single factor which has caused so much hatred, bitterness, and suspicion as belief in the activities of sorcerers. Conversion to [797] Christianity has scarcely altered it, and men who have been members of the church for ten to twenty years remain fully convinced that some of their associates have loathsome abilities as sorcerers. In many parts of the world, belief in black magic and witchcraft is one of the last native convictions to pass away, and it seems probable that this will be the case in Bella Coola although, of course, it will become increasingly difficult to obtain information about the subject.

The actual methods used by different sorcerers vary, although most of them require an article which has been in contact with their intended victim. Consequently, they seek pieces of soiled clothing, nail parings, hair clippings, spittle, and other objects of the same type which are usually concealed

3: Smith E-5 (1920-1923) 1925
NE6 Bellacoola NE6

SYMPATHETIC MAGIC AND WITCHCRAFT AMONG THE BELLACOOLA

By HARLAN I. SMITH

MANY OF the Bellacoola Indians today believe in sympathetic magic and witchcraft, after over a hundred years of contact with white men. Most of them live within hearing of the bells of the mission church, and the government school. Not a few of the men take logging contracts; some of them build and operate motor boats; many of them join the fishing fleets of the salmon canneries; most of the women work in the canneries; and all deal at the white men's stores.

The Bellacoola lived at the heads of the long inlets half way up the Pacific Coast of Canada and in the tributary Bella Coola valley. Now, numbering perhaps two hundred and fifty, they, with the exception of a few families, are concentrated on one reservation at the mouth of the Bella Coola river. The Bella Coola valley has been called the Norway of Canada. This was where Sir Alexander Mackenzie, the first white man to cross Canada overland, reached the sea.

Aboriginally, the Bellacoola were of the North Pacific Coast culture of America, which is characterized by the extensive use of red cedar and sea products, particularly salmon, the making of graceful, sea-going canoes, each hewn from a single cedar, the erection of large rectangular houses made of cedar planks, with carved house posts and totem poles, lack of pottery, and expertness in carpenter work, carving, and painting. This culture belongs to the barefoot area, but the Bellacoolas wore moccasins to a certain extent. The art of the area was that best known from the paintings and carvings of the totem poles, largely of conventionalized animal forms. The life centred around a very highly developed social organization, an extensive and powerful financial system, and property rights to names, rituals and honors. The Bellacoola language is one of the Salish linguistic stock. They